

EXHIBIT 22



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Recycling soars online

Web site matches up unwanted stuff with people happy to have it

BY BILLY COX

FLORIDA TODAY

Less than a month into her wild hair of an impulse called the Brevard County Freecycle Network, Charlotte Hess is a bit overwhelmed. Not only have 152 people joined as local Web site members, without a shred of advertising to draw them in, they're beginning to post items they want to get rid of -- for free.

"People who were initially just asking for stuff are starting to list things they want to give away," Hess says. "I think they're getting it."

Thus, with a few clicks of the mouse, this Melbourne resident has brought a national recycling phenomenon to the Space Coast. It may not be enough to save the earth, but for now, it's leaving a lot of people feeling reinvigorated.

When Merritt Island's Wendy Keighley logged on, she wondered whether there was any demand for that old computer, camera and lenses collecting dust in

storage and probably bound for the trash collector. Within a day or so of putting them up for grabs, they were gone. Then there was the woman who wanted the extra fabric Keighley posted on the Web site.

"She gave this ladies' magazine to me when she got here," Keighley recalls. "She said, 'I just can't come here empty-handed.' She wanted to give me something. It's such a great thing. If everyone has this attitude of giving as well as taking, this is going to help a lot of people."

BCFN is one of many new additions to Freecycle.org, a nonprofit outfit based in Tucson, Ariz., and founded on the idea that Americans might be a little less wasteful if presented with decent options.

Established in May 2003 by an Arizonian named Deron Beal, what began as a one-man Internet crusade has blossomed into 682 groups nationwide, counting more than 120,000 members.

"It's been a life-affirming discovery for me," says Beal, whose highly contagious brainstorm has rated spreads in the likes of People magazine, The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times. "At first, I thought, nah, it'll never work. People are going to want a lot more than they're willing to give away. But they've proven me wrong. The reason this is working is because people are being so nice to each other."

Beal, who runs a small recycling group that partners with Tucson, got fed up with all the perfectly good things people were tossing out each day for the garbage collectors. The waste he saw underscored the Environmental Protection Agency's estimates that Americans recycle less than 30 percent of their refuse. Maybe, if

given the opportunity to give away those same things on a Web site, consumers could keep durable goods in circulation a whole lot longer.

So Beal designed Freecycle.org with two key message features: offer posts and wanted posts. The former would allow people to briefly list whatever they wanted to get rid of, and the latter would be a call for specific items of need. Posters could respond directly to each other's messages, following one intractable rule: No money changes hands. Everything had to be given away -- or hauled off -- for free.

Interest in Freecycle.org quickly exceeded its geographical boundaries and caught on worldwide. Nothing, Beal discovered, was too meager for recycling. Not even used socks with holes. "There was a local group here in Tucson that needed some for a puppet show," Beal says.

Freecycle.org has had to make adjustments according to the postings. For instance, Beal had to get specific about what the site wouldn't accept, such as people wanting dates, adult material or anything else that wasn't family-friendly. The bottom line, however, adds new heft to the "Think Globally, Act Locally" adage. Beal estimates, conservatively, that each member group conducts an average of 40 exchanges a day, or 28,000 daily exchanges based on 700 groups. "If you figure that each exchange involves 1 pound worth of material," he says, "that means you're keeping 14 tons of garbage out of landfills each day."

Beal says the success of Freecycle.org's myriad affiliates may be directly related to the decline of community sensibilities. Between television, computers and the transient nature of American society, Beal says neighborhoods have produced next-door strangers for decades. The irony with Freecycle.org is how its Internet

initiative appears to be pulling people together. He says affiliates should keep transactions close to home, "because driving a long way for an exchange sort of defeats the purpose of conservation."

What Freecycle.org also reinforces is America's abundance.

"The existing myth out there is that there's a scarcity of stuff, that we're all going to have to fight for everything we get, that we're going to have to work harder to earn more money and consume less," he says. "The reality is, there's plenty of stuff to go around."

Small wonder, then, that Charlotte Hess was the one who started BCFN.

A former Palm Bay police dispatcher (She was on duty during the William Cruise shooting rampage in 1987.) and mother of four, Hess is a coupon-clipping, freebie-grabbing, sweepstakes prize-winning Tallahassee native who's always looking for a good deal.

"I've got a robo form on my computer that I enter sweepstakes with," she says. "I can whip through 100 contest entries in 30 minutes."

Winning anywhere from three to four sweepstakes prizes a month, and hitting up companies like General Mills for free samples (at last count, she had 10 boxes of free Cheerios in her kitchen), Hess' most recent coup is a 31-inch, flat-screen home-theater system she won from a Denny's promotion.

Hess stumbled across the Freecycle.org Web site in early May, and was impressed at how quickly it was catching on across the country (biggest affiliate: Portland, Ore., with 5,600 members). Surprised that no one in Brevard had started a local chapter, Hess followed sign-up instructions and launched BCFN.

Traffic has been brisk: cloth diapers, fish tank accessories, postcards, CDs, books, shoes, candlemaking supplies, recliners, swing sets -- you name it, people want it. Or want to give it away. One of the most moving tales came from a woman whose landlord had no intention of replacing a broken refrigerator and stove. She posted her needs on Hess's link, and within hours was contacted by a woman who unsuccessfully had attempted to unload those very items -- old, but not obsolete - at a garage sale. So the tenant got functional kitchen hardware at no charge. "Giving away your extra or unused things directly to people who are going to benefit from it gives you a great feeling," says Hess, who posted her 1989 Reliant -- it needed \$100 worth of repairs -- and was getting hits within hours. "I'm not trying to save the world, but if we can each do a little bit, it might make a difference."

Contact Cox at 242-3774 or bcox@flatoday.net

How to sign up

The local Freecycle group has 152 members. To get involved:

- 1) Log on to Freecycle.org.
- 2) Choose your region (US Southern)
- 3) Click GoTo to view recent messages, click Join to become a member.

Other Florida groups:

Members

Apopka 94

Bradenton 160

Dade City 92

Daytona Beach 169

Fort Myers 121

Fort Walton Beach 55

Fort Lauderdale 316

Gainesville 240

Jacksonville 579

Longwood 34

Miami 455

Naples 159

Navarre 2

Osceola County 44

Palatka 43

Palm Beach County 173

Pensacola 273

Polk County 195

Sarasota 104

Seminole County 203

New Smyrna Beach 16

St. Augustine 99

Tallahassee 186

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